

# IN OUR BACKYARD

JAN - 2 1991



## AN UPDATE FROM THE ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION



## Season's Greetings

FROM ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE  
MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

## Pesticide Container Clean-up

In the week of October 30, ASWMC took on a challenging new task. At the request of Alberta Environment, the Corporation assumed responsibility for the 1989 Pesticide Container Collection and Disposal Program in Alberta.

The program involves the

collection and disposal of some 500,000 pesticide containers from 110 storage sites throughout the province. The plastic, steel and aluminum containers will be collected, shredded, washed, and where possible, processed into raw materials suitable for re-use by industry. Materials that cannot be recycled will be collected and treated in accordance with approved treatment procedures.

Funding is being provided through an imaginative system instituted this year, and administered by the Crop Protection Institute of Canada

We wish you the best of everything this holiday season. Clean air. Clean land. And clean water. With your help and cooperation, we're working to preserve Alberta's precious environment for present and future generations.

Already, Alberta's achievements in hazardous waste management have set an example for the world. We've virtually eliminated all the liquid PCBs that were stored awaiting destruction. We're actively engaged in pesticide container control programs. We've created a program of public education that is proving enormously effective.

At this time of hope and reflection, we can truly say that the future holds special promise. To you and your family, we extend all good wishes for a Joyful Holiday and a Happy New Year.

(CPIC), in cooperation with Canadian farmers. Under this system, a fund has been established by collecting a one dollar per container premium from farmers to defray the costs of container collection and disposal. These funds will be released on an as-needed basis to ASWMC for the Alberta program.

ASWMC will contract the collection and disposal functions by tender and will oversee the services provided by the successful contractor or contractors. The program is expected to commence in early 1990.

### November/December 1989

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"In Our Backyard" is a bi-monthly publication produced by the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation. Its role is to keep Albertans updated on issues and solutions in hazardous waste management in their province.

ASWMC welcomes your comments or suggestions.

Write, call or fax:  
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Communications ASWMC  
(see page 4 for address and telephone number)



Alberta  
Special Waste  
Management  
Corporation  
AN ALBERTA CROWN CORPORATION

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# That's Vesta, not Vespa

When the federal government and provincial and electrical utility sponsors announced on November 1st that they were taking to the

comparatively small in size, it has the capacity to generate temperatures in excess of 1100°C – the level needed to burn PCB wastes safely.



Photo courtesy of the Grizzly Gazette

road with their new Vesta 100 unit, ordinary folks could be forgiven for getting confused.

So let's explain that what we're talking about here is not an Italian motor scooter but a mobile incinerator which – if proven successful in testing – could help to relieve the problem of accumulated PCBs in communities across Canada.

Though similar in name to Italy's famous two-wheeler, any comparison ends right there. The Vesta is approximately 100 feet long and eight feet wide. And while mobile enough to operate almost anywhere, it's definitely not recommended for nipping around Naples in search of a decent cappuccino.

What the Vesta lacks in maneuverability, however, it makes up for in power. Though

Determining whether it can do so in a manner which meets stringent Canadian standards is the purpose of the test program being conducted at the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre near Swan Hills through November and December.

The Vesta 100 incinerator is presently undergoing a series of three tests, in which PCB wastes are being burned at temperatures above 1100°C. The program involves a comprehensive test protocol including monitoring and analysis of emissions. The program is being observed and its results analysed by an independent quality control/quality assurance expert.

The Vesta 100 tests are jointly sponsored and funded by Environment Canada, the Quebec and Ontario Ministries

of the Environment, Ontario Hydro, Hydro-Quebec, and Vesta Technology Limited. The Alberta government has demonstrated its support for the program by allowing the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre to be used as a site for the evaluations.

While the Vesta 100 technology has not been used until now for PCB incineration or in any capacity in Canada, it has been approved by the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency as being safe and effective for destroying organic wastes including dioxins.

These are the first tests in Canada of this type of incinerator and their outcome could prove significant, since the Vesta 100 is potentially suitable for destroying the relatively small and widely dispersed volumes of PCBs in storage at locations across Canada.

## ALTERNATIVES

When you think about where they finish up, it's clear that pouring household hazardous wastes down the drain or sewer is just asking for trouble. Wastes thrown down the drain can eventually contaminate streams and groundwater. And even if the wastes go through a sewage treatment plant, the plant may be unable to detoxify the waste or its operation may be disrupted if the unexpected chemicals destroy the bacteria which break down human wastes. Hazardous waste in waste water and sewage treatment plants may also vapourize at the plant, adding to air pollution in the surrounding area.

What can you do? Either use alternatives to potentially harmful chemicals – or make sure you dispose of hazardous wastes correctly. Incidentally, when a product carries the S-bend drain symbol, with the angled cancellation mark, it should **never** be poured down the drain. Some examples – and some options – follow:

Product	Hazard	Recommended Disposal method	Alternative
Silver Polish	Corrosive, toxic.	Store safely until special collection is available. Empty containers can go into trash.	Soak silver in boiling water, baking soda and a piece of aluminum.
Rug and Upholstery Cleaners	Corrosive, toxic, irritant.	Store safely for special collection.	Dry cornstarch sprinkled on rug then vacuumed up.
Paint and Furniture Strippers	Flammable, toxic.	Store safely for special collection.	Use sandpaper or heat gun.

If you know of similar non-toxic alternatives to household products, we'd like to hear from you. Send your suggestions to ASWMC Update at the address shown on the back page.





## The Round-up Returns

Round-ups may be as common in the 1990s as they were in the Alberta of yesteryear.

Organized by individual communities throughout the province with support from the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation (ASWMC) 71 Toxic Round-ups have taken place in Alberta during 1989, collecting 1360 barrels (200 tonnes) of household hazardous wastes. Outstanding results for a program that began as a pilot project in 1988 in just eight communities!

The Round-ups give Albertans an opportunity to actively take part in the safe disposal of potentially hazardous wastes that might otherwise be disposed of improperly.

### SECOND SUCCESS

Everything from old paint thinner to dead car batteries can be taken to special community collection sites organized for the occasion. Materials collected during a Round-up are classified and packed by qualified personnel, then sent

to the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre for proper treatment and disposal.

One jurisdiction which is especially pleased with the program is Strathcona county. It organized a Toxic Round-up as part of the ASWMC pilot program in 1988, and followed that success with a second Round-up in August of this year. On both occasions, county organizers experienced a high level of community support and achieved excellent results.

"We've held extremely successful Toxic Round-ups in Strathcona County," confirms Jacquie McLellan, Administrative Assistant at the county's Public Works Department. "We had collection centres at four fire stations throughout the county and we collected 90 barrels of waste materials last year, and 88 barrels this year.

And don't be misled by that drop in quantity. The number of participants in the Strathcona Round-up actually **doubled** this year over last. The decline in the number of barrels does not reflect a decline in the amount of waste material collected this year, but is a result

of the more efficient packing methods developed as a result of the 1988 pilot projects.

### JOINT EFFORT

Jacquie McLellan credits the successes to three main factors: Multiple collection sites conveniently located for most country residents; the scheduling of the Round-up on a weekend when people have the time to participate; and well-planned publicity and advertising.

The county received support from ASWMC in the form of planning and practical assistance. 17,000 brochures were supplied for distribution with the local newspaper, 200 posters were displayed throughout the county, barrels were provided for packing waste materials, and trained personnel staffed the collection sites on the day of the Round-up.

The Round-up was jointly coordinated by the County Fire Department, with support from several other county departments including Public Works. County-supplied newspaper advertisements and press releases to local media supplemented the publicity materials provided by ASWMC.

### THE FUTURE

More Toxic Round-ups are planned for the future and a tentative long-term plan for the county includes setting up a permanent collection facility to deal with household wastes generated in Strathcona communities.

The Toxic Round-ups in Strathcona have helped to increase awareness of potentially hazardous wastes and the need for their safe disposal, says Jacquie McLellan.

"Overall, the Toxic Round-ups have helped clean up the county and increase awareness of toxic wastes and the benefits of a cleaner environment," says McLellan. "Better still, we have a safer community with fewer potential health hazards to everyone, particularly children."

For information on how to organize a Toxic Round-up in **your** community, you're invited to contact Tom Thackeray at ASWMC. Telephone 1-800-272-8873, or, in Edmonton, call 422-5029.

## Appointments

On August 3rd, ASWMC Chairman Robert C. Clark welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors.

### AL MacFARLENE

A director and former president of the Whitecourt Chamber of Commerce, Mr. MacFarlene has been a resident of Whitecourt since moving from Edmonton in 1979. An active community volunteer, he was named Businessman of the Year by the Alberta Chamber of Commerce in 1985, and received the President's Award and Citizen of the Year Award from the Whitecourt Chamber of Commerce.

### TAK OKAMURA A.L.S., P. Eng.

The President and General Manager of Brown, Okamura & Associates Ltd., Tak Okamura has been a resident of Lethbridge since 1948. A graduate in Civil Engineering from the University of Alberta, Mr. Okamura has an extensive record of service in both professional and service organizations.

He served as a Director of the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce from 1986 to 1989.



# What they're saying in Manitoba...

Typical of the groups visiting the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre was a study group from Rossburn, Manitoba, which toured the operation in mid-August. The trip, sponsored by the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation, was organized to explore the merits of establishing a similar facility in the Rossburn region. It drew some interesting responses from those taking part – for example:

*"A very impressive tour ... eliminated all my worry and concern over incineration."*

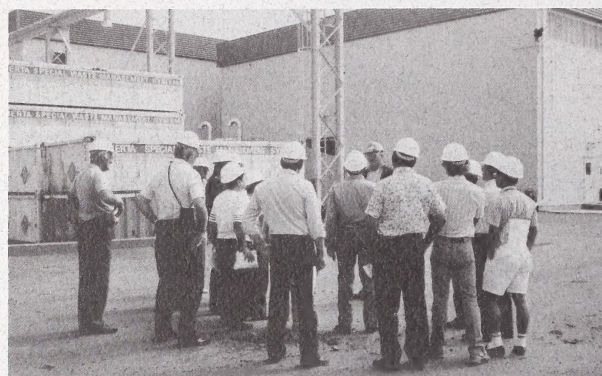
- Ken Caldwell  
Chairman, Rossburn  
Advisory Committee

*"I am thoroughly convinced. And there is no doubt in my mind that the Swan Hills Centre is of great value in disposing of special waste. I hope we have one in Rossburn."*

- Ted Wasylenko  
Ukrainian Orthodox  
Church, Lions, Senior

*"What I'm hyped up about is the confidence that the people of Swan Hills have about their plant. I just wish we could have all of Rossburn and area see the facility – and I think that 99% would then be convinced that it would be a good thing to have."*

- Ernie Antonow  
R.M. Secretary-  
Treasurer, Fish & Game  
Association



*"Speaking as Fire Chief of Rossburn, I was impressed with the general safety."*

- Larry Sidoruk  
Rossburn Fire  
Department

*"I was impressed with the general public, townspeople, and workers' knowledge of the plant – and how they were aware of the potential problems. They incorporate safety and are aware of the risks if anything does happen. The safety factor was my main concern."*

- Patti Chegwin  
Medical Association,  
FACTS

*"I found the trip to Swan Hills very informative and sense there was a real pride in their Centre. There was excellent, open communication between the plant, town council, the Liaison Committee, and the public. I was very impressed, when I toured the plant, on the cleanliness, safety, high technology, and good management."*

- Doris Caldwell  
Nurse

*"I'm convinced that such a facility will be a tremendous benefit to our community."*

- Russell Andrew  
FACTS, farmer

## A Centre of Expertise in the centre of Alberta

At one time, tourists arriving in Swan Hills had some predictable objectives in mind. Most were drawn by the chance to hunt and fish in uncrowded wilderness surroundings. Others came to camp and explore along the Grizzly Trail. Some wanted nothing more than the chance to stand in the geographic centre of Alberta, 30 kilometres south of town. In recent years, however, the town has developed a new – if unlikely – tourist attraction.

Every month, people are coming in the hundreds to visit the Alberta Special Waste Treatment Centre – generally acknowledged as the most sophisticated integrated treatment centre in the world, and also as the cornerstone of a system that is years ahead in waste management expertise.

From as far away as Malaysia and as close to home as Manitoba, concerned groups are exploring the possibilities of establishing similar plants and systems in their own localities, drawing on the knowledge gained here in the province.

## CALL DIRECT:

- ▲ For information on:
  - Hazardous Waste Management Programs in Alberta
  - Toxic Round-up
  - Community Study Groups**ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION**  
 1-800-272-8873  
 422-5029 (Edmonton)  
 428-9627 (Fax)
- ▲ For a directory of waste management companies in Alberta:
 **ALBERTA SPECIAL WASTE SERVICES ASSOCIATION**  
 424-6384 (Edmonton)
- ▲ For information on:
  - Used Oil Program
  - Recycling: Newspaper, Metals, Plastic, Clothing**RECYCLING BRANCH, ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT**  
 427-5838 (Edmonton)  
 297-5923 (Calgary)
- ▲ To access the clearing house that puts potential users of waste materials in contact with waste producers:
 **ALBERTA WASTE MATERIALS EXCHANGE**  
 450-5408 (Edmonton)
- ▲ To report an environmental emergency or register a complaint:
 **POLLUTION CONTROL DIVISION, ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT**  
 1-800-222-6514
- ▲ For information on the transportation of dangerous goods:
 **ALBERTA PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES**  
 1-800-272-9600

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